

REGULAR MEETING OF THE JASPER COUNTY COUNCIL FEBRUARY 21, 2017

The Jasper County Council met this date at 7:00 P.M. C.S.T. in the Commissioners Room, Suite 202, of the Jasper County Courthouse located at 115 West Washington Street, Rensselaer, Indiana, with the following members present: Rein Bontreger, Stephen Jordan, Gerrit H. DeVries, Andrew Andree, Gary Fritts, Paul Norwine and Brett Risner. Also present were Kimberly K. Grow, Jasper County Auditor and Tina Porter, Deputy Auditor. Mr. Bontreger called the meeting to order and those present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mr. Risner.

MINUTES: Mr. Fritts made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular January 17, 2017 meeting, as presented. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMISSION / RIGHT TO KNOW: Mrs. Wilson was present to request an Additional Appropriation in the amount of \$8,000.00. Of that amount, \$5,349.47 will be used to purchase a dual-band portable radio that gets both VHF and 800MH frequency for the Health Department. The other \$1,112.40 will go towards the purchase of two Sensit 4 gas calibration kits for the Remington Fire Department. She stated that the gas kits will be used at their upcoming table-top exercise on April 13th at 6:00 P.M. at Kankakee Valley High School. The exercise will consist of pool chemicals being accidentally mixed. It will be a mass situation with many involved. All school administrators, parents and students will be made aware of the exercise. She extended an invitation to the Council. Mr. Andree commented that he, Mr. DeVries and Mr. Price attended last year and found it to be a very worthwhile, eye-opening event to see what happens when there is a catastrophe. Mr. DeVries made a motion to approve the additional appropriation request in the amount of \$8,000.00. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance No. 2017-02A**

Mr. Fritts asked Mrs. Wilson if we were to have an emergency, such as a tornado, would she be the one that would be coordinating the efforts or does each department just respond naturally. She replied that it goes both ways. If the National Weather Service were to send us notification, it would go to the Sheriff's Department and 911 first, who would put out the alerts. There would be storm spotters out. Usually, the one that is first in charge is the incident commander, the one that arrives on the scene first. The commander will then decide if there is going to be unified command. Mrs. Wilson said that she is also there as a supporting function to get resources above and beyond what we have available in the county. Sheriff Risner added that a command center would be established. It would be up to the Emergency Management Director to immediately start assessing if we're going to need further outside assistance. If so, she would correlate with the Commissioners to get an emergency declaration.

Mrs. Wilson stated that she recently had the National Weather Service here to do a storm spotter training. There were sixty people that participated, including people from the Sheriff's Department, Rensselaer City, dispatchers, firemen, EMS and students.

There was discussion regarding the closure of St. Joseph's College and the agreement we have with them for shelter. Mr. Bontreger recommended that Mrs. Wilson start exploring other options for shelter.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS / SHERIFF RISNER: Sheriff Risner was present to request an Additional Appropriation in the amount of \$40,000.00. This is a continuation from the January meeting when he received a Council Approved Transfer from the CEDIT maintenance agreement account to purchase a new server. This appropriation will be used to replenish the maintenance agreement account. The order for the equipment has been placed and they have a tentative date set for March to finalize the switch-over to the new equipment. The maintenance agreement account covers the generator, fire-suppression system, radios, Havel and service on the elevator among other things. These are paid at various times throughout the year, rather than all at once, depending on when the initial maintenance agreements were placed in to effect. Mr. Bontreger stated that since this is a continuation from a previous meeting, it makes sense to approve it. He also said that there will be a joint meeting with the Commissioners in March and, starting next month, they want to make sure the additional are really needed. He understands that Sheriff Risner needs this. Down the line, they want to extend the lead time in order for the Council to have a few months to process the requests. He said that he will probably call those that come in for requests to let them know.

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ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS / SHERIFF RISNER CONT'D: The County is trying to establish with our accounting firm proper fund balances and percentages as well as written financial targets and goals. Mr. Norwine made a motion to approve the additional request in the amount of \$40,000.00 in the CEDIT Maintenance Agreement Fund. Mr. Jordan seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance No. 2017-02B**

Sheriff Risner stated that he received a report dated January 11th from Indianapolis in regards to the cyber attack that Madison County suffered. It cost the county more than \$220,000.00. He believes that the money spent on our equipment was prevention money well spent.

His second request is for \$25,000.00 to replenish the CEDIT Computer Supplies fund. They usually have \$35,000.00 in this fund that is used for maintaining laptops, desktop units and mobile data terminals, etc. This has nothing to do with what is currently being improved within the department. Mr. Bontreger stated that it also makes sense to approve this request. Mr. Risner made a motion to approve the additional request in the amount of \$25,000.00 in the CEDIT Computer Supplies Fund. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance No. 2017-02C**

Sheriff Risner gave Mr. Bontreger the 2016 Jail Report. He said that they served just over 84,000 meals, averaging \$1.41 per meal, which is less than the allowable \$1.83 per meal. He could have submitted a claim that would have been approximately \$35,000.00, but under his contract, the savings comes back to the county. He said that they try to be efficient and only have two matrons that oversee the cooking. They had one-thousand one hundred and four inmates booked in to the facility. He said he would also like to make note that the Sheriff's Department brings money in to the County's General Fund, last year the amount being \$68,874.80, from sheriff's sales and fees, tax warrant fees, medical co-payments, firearms applications, accident reports and level six felons. He told the Council if they have any questions on the report to please let him know. Mr. Bontreger told Sheriff Risner they appreciate his diligence and he thanked the Council for their cooperation with the additionals on an emergency basis.

ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATION / JUDGE AHLER: Judge Ahler was present to request an Additional Appropriation in the amount of \$4,087.00. He mentioned that this topic has been discussed before when he originally submitted his 2017 budget. His budget request was put in for less than a full-time Court Reporter at the time. Court Reporter Number One is making \$41,942.00. The difference between Court Reporter Number Two and Court Reporter Number One is \$4,087.00. He would like their pay to be equal. Mr. Bontreger asked how things are going and he replied that things are going well, but it's not an easy position to learn. When Terri Budde left, she took with her thirty one years of experience and it's hard to replace that. When asked by Mr. Fritts when the Court Reporters were hired, Judge Ahler replied that the first Court Reporter started in December and the second approximately four to six weeks later. The second Court Reporter came from the Prosecutor's Office. Mr. Norwine made a motion to approve the additional request in the amount of \$4,087.00 for Court Reporter Number Two to equalize the pay. Mr. DeVries seconded and the motion carried unanimously. **Ordinance No. 2017-02D**

Mr. Andree asked Judge Ahler about the interpreters that he mentioned previously. He replied that it looks as though they will be trying three non-English speaking defendants at the end of March or April. Right now, they are lined up to be tried at the same time. He understands that they will probably make motions to be tried separately, which they've done in the past and he's denied it. To be efficient, he wants to try them together. Their charges arise out of the same set of facts and circumstances. Judge Ahler mentioned that there was a dip for a year or two where they were seeing fewer cases of non-English speaking defendants in the courtroom, but the numbers are right back up for 2017. Mr. Bontreger asked about his case load numbers. Judge Ahler replied that there is a state-wide trend with criminal case numbers dropping a bit, but that is in the number of cases, not the type. Major felony cases are up. He said if the case with the three defendants does go to trial, it will require him to come back and request that money be set aside for that. Mr. Bontreger asked if he has to have an interpreter for each defendant. He replied that if he tries them together, he will only need two interpreters. There must be two interpreters, no matter the number of defendants.

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TRANSFER / PAT DONNELLY: Auditor Grow stated that Mr. Donnelly sent, by letter, a request to transfer \$200.00 to Office Supplies from Furniture and Equipment in the County General Fund. Mr. Bontreger commented that Mr. Donnelly is frugal with his resources. Mr. Andree made a motion to approve the transfer request. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

JASPER COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BOARD APPOINTMENT: Mr. Bontreger stated that he talked to Stephanie Johnson, who is employed by Jasper County REMC, and she is willing to accept an appointment on the Redevelopment Commission Board. Mr. Norwine said that she will be excellent and Mr. Bontreger agreed. Mr. Bontreger said that it was pointed out to him that the Board didn't meet in 2016. They meet on a need-by-need basis. Mr. DeVries made a motion to appoint Stephanie Johnson to the Jasper County Redevelopment Commission Board. Mr. Norwine seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

ALCOHOL BEVERAGE COMMISSION: Mr. Bontreger stated that Shelli Risner is the nominee for the Alcohol Beverage Commission. Mr. Jordan made a motion to appoint Shelli Risner to this Board. Mr. Andree asked if she worked for this Board at one time before and Mr. Risner replied that she worked for a distributor so she is familiar with the laws. Mr. Fritts seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

LOCAL INCOME TAX / LIT: Mr. Bontreger stated that he'd like to have LIT on the agenda for March so they can start discussing thoughts and ideas on the subject.

ST JOSEPH'S COLLEGE: Mr. Bontreger stated that the college situation is of great importance. He is aware there are plans and discussions to try to come up with local assistance for affected employees, although he doesn't have any specifics. There will be a meeting coming up in March to discuss how this will affect the county. He said that this is a very serious event with a lot of ramifications that will ripple through the local economy.

ANIMAL CONTROL: Mr. DeVries stated that he, Mr. Andree, Mr. Fritts and Mr. Bontreger went to the event held at the Animal Shelter for the County Representatives and he would like to thank them and say that he was very impressed with how things are going out there as far as improvements. He thinks that Mr. Sinclair is doing a very good job. Mr. Bontreger added that it was very well organized and he likes that they are trying to make adoptions available to local residents first before they send the animals to rescues. Mr. Fritts agreed that they've made a lot of nice improvements and Mr. Andree commented that they really care about what they do.

KEVIN KELLY: Mr. Kelly stated that he doesn't have anything specific to share, but would be happy to answer any questions the Council may have. Mr. Bontreger asked him if he's been receiving a lot of calls concerning jobs. He said that he's received a few calls and concerns regarding the St. Joseph situation. The college is required to give sixty days' notice. They sent a letter out to coaches and some of the administrators that their last day will be April 17, 2017. The majority of the rest of the positions will be no longer after the semester is over. He said it will be interesting to see what is done as far as security, maintenance and the facility in addition to what they retain for the nursing program at St. Elizabeth's in Lafayette. Mr. Bontreger told Mr. Kelly that he's directed people to his website. He mentioned that there's a link on the site for St. Joseph's College. Mr. Kelly replied that he left the link there because it will take you to the college's Career Center, which is supposed to have jobs posted for other companies for those looking for work.

There was discussion about the new auto parts store coming to Rensselaer, the hotels in the area and how they may be affected by the new Fair Oaks hotel and St. Joseph's college closing and the truck stop that was supposed to go in at Route 10 and Interstate 65.

TAX RATES: Auditor Grow stated that she should be getting the tax rates this week. As soon as she receives them, she will get them advertised. She also reported that we are ahead of schedule for our property taxes for 2017 pay 2018. We got our ratio study approved thirty-four days earlier than we did last year.

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There being no further business, Mr. Andree made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Risner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Rein O. Bontreger, President

ATTEST:

Kimberly K. Grow, Auditor of Jasper County